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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE  
THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION  
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#### HEADLINES

##### MASS APPEAL

PM Erdogan: We Are Strategic Partners With US - Aksam 2/21  
Cicek: We Are Strategic Partners With US - Turkiye  
Erdogan, Bush to Meet Briefly in Brussels - Hurriyet  
Bush Tours Europe to Find Support - Aksam  
Bush, Chirac Urge Syria to Withdraw From Lebanon - Milliyet  
Le Figaro: Turkey Gradually Becoming Fundamentalist -  
Hurriyet  
TIME: US Bargains With Iraqi Resistance - Sabah  
Israel Releases Palestinians in Goodwill Gesture - Aksam  
Palestine Celebrates Release of 500 Prisoners - Turkiye

##### OPINION MAKERS

Bush Extends Olive Branch to Europe - Cumhuriyet  
Bush to Europe: No Force Can Pull Us Apart - Zaman  
Bush to Europe: Let's Start a New Era - Yeni Safak  
US Seeks Peace With 'Old Continent' - Cumhuriyet 2/21  
No Scheduled Bush-Erdogan Meeting in Brussels - Cumhuriyet  
2/21  
Sunnis, Boycotters of Iraqi Polls, Want to Join Iraqi  
Politics - Zaman  
Iraqi Sunnis in Search of a New Strategy - Yeni Safak  
Zawahiri: Security of West Depends on Respect for Islam -  
Yeni Safak  
Turkish Cypriots Vote For Solution -- Talat Wins 'TRNC'  
Election - Zaman 2/21  
Syria Prepares to Pull Out of Lebanon - Zaman  
Jewish Settlers Resist Withdrawal, Pose Threat to Peace -  
Cumhuriyet

#### BRIEFING

Cicek: Strain With US is Over: PM Tayyip Erdogan and FM  
Abdullah Gul traveled to Brussels on Monday to attend the  
NATO summit meeting. Papers speculate that Erdogan may meet  
with President Bush, and Gul with Secretary Rice over lunch  
in Brussels. Gul is expected to convey to Rice Ankara's  
uneasiness about rising anti-Turkish stories in the American  
press, "Cumhuriyet" reports. "Sabah" claims that the Turks  
will respond to the American request to enhance Ankara's  
contribution to the 'NATO Training Implementation Mission'  
in Iraq by sending more officers. On Monday, government  
spokesman Cemil Cicek said after a meeting of cabinet  
ministers that the US and Turkey have enjoyed an unbroken  
historical relationship stretching back more than half a  
century. There have been some 'fault lines' in the past,  
Cicek acknowledged, 'but this is now over.' Cicek added that  
both countries would benefit from a continuation of the  
relationship at all levels. Responding to a question about  
the unusually 'soft' tone PM Erdogan used in evaluating  
bilateral ties before Secretary Rice's visit to Ankara,  
Cicek said the substance of such statements should be heeded  
rather than their style. 'Turkey values, as has been proven  
many times, its relations with the United States,' Cicek  
stressed. On Sunday, PM Erdogan strongly denied news  
claiming a strain in ties with the US after he met with  
local businessmen in Turkey's southeastern province of  
Gaziantep: 'Our strategic partnership with the United States  
continues. Secretary Rice has said the same thing,' Erdogan  
underlined. Monday's "Radikal" claims that Turkey's  
National Security Council (NSC) will look for ways at its  
February 25 meeting to 'normalize' relations between the US  
and Turkey. MFA Undersecretary Ali Tuygan is to visit  
Washington in March, followed by NSC Undersecretary Yigit  
Alpogan, "Radikal" reports.

Turkish Cypriot Elections: Republican Turkish Party (CTP)  
leader Mehmet Ali Talat secured 24 of the 50 seats in the  
'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' (TRNC) parliament  
after obtaining 44.5 percent of the vote, but failed to gain

an outright majority to set up a government on his own. His main rival, the National Unity Party (UBP) of former prime minister Dervis Eroglu, got 19 seats, while Talat's coalition partner, Serdar Denktas's Democrat Party (DP), won 6 seats. Papers expect Talat to once again form a coalition with DP. Talat called on Greek Cypriot President Papadopoulos to agree to revive the stalled peace process. A spokesman for the Greek Government said on Monday that Greece hoped for a more 'constructive' stance from the Turkish Cypriots in northern Cyprus.

Britain Prepares for Direct Flights to 'TRNC': Britain is to launch direct flights to northern Cyprus after July 1, the date Britain will take over the EU term presidency, "Zaman" reports. The article is based on a report in the "European Voice," a Brussels-based publication. The UK is working on a formula to begin charter flights to the north, as Ercan Airport in the 'TRNC' is not recognized by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Greek, Armenian Lobbies Support WSJ Article Against Turkey: Conservative/opinion maker "Zaman" reports that the Greek and Armenian lobbies in the US have distributed a recent article, 'The Sick Man of Europe --- Again,' by Robert L. Pollock of "The Wall Street Journal" to US congressmen who are close to their causes. Many Armenians in the US have congratulated Pollock, but reaction from the Turks has been harsh, "Zaman" notes.

Iraqi Turkmen 'Regret' Not Teaming Up With Kurds: Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) chairman in Erbil, Abdulkadir Bezirgan, said the ITF made a mistake by not entering into an alliance with the Kurds in last month's election in Iraq, "Cumhuriyet" and "Zaman" report. 'We could have entered the Iraqi parliament on a joint list with the Kurds, and split to form our own group later,' Bezirgan said. He added that a number of other Turkmen-based political groups had cooperated with the Kurds and achieved a better result. Bezirgan claimed that some 1 million votes cast by Turkmen had 'disappeared.'

Erdogan Names New Culture And Tourism Minister: PM Erdogan on Monday named Atilla Koc, a 59-year-old former bureaucrat, as Turkey's new culture and tourism minister to replace Erkan Mumcu, who last week resigned from the AK Party. Erdogan's unscheduled, two-hour meeting with President Sezer led to speculation that a long-awaited cabinet reshuffle might have been discussed, but Erdogan made no comment after the meeting. The press speculates that Erdogan had proposed to move State Minister Besir Atalay to the Ministry of Education. Under the alleged plan, current Education Minister Huseyin Celik would have become Minister of tourism, and Koc would have been appointed as State Minister to replace Atalay. President Sezer reportedly rejected the formula. Meanwhile, Malatya deputy Suleyman Saribas, a figure close to Mumcu, resigned from AKP yesterday. More resignations will follow soon, papers report.

#### EDITORIAL OPINION: Transatlantic Relations

##### "US Uneasiness"

Melih Asik argued in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (2/22): "In fact, the anti-Americanism level in Turkey is not much different from that in France and Germany. The BBC opinion poll rated anti-American sentiment at 82 percent in Turkey, whereas Germany and France came in at 77 and 75 percent, respectively. Despite the lack of a significant difference, the US has chosen to 'deal with' Turkey on this issue - not with the others. Turkey has been placed under Washington's psychological pressure. Obviously the US wants to put Turkey in the dock in order to wring some concessions out of this psychology - namely, the use of Incirlik Airbase. If Turkey becomes influenced by these accusations and takes side with the US, it would mean being a partner to new massacres the US intends to carry out in Iran and Syria."

##### "President Bush's Holy Mission"

Uluc Gurkan wrote in the government-controlled, sensationalist "Star" (2/22): "US President Bush believes he has a holy mission to reshape the Islamic world in the Middle East. He is on a mission from God, and to move it forward he has to launch new strikes against Syria and Iran. This is what he believes, but he does not know how to get it done. . . If Bush manages to persuade EU leaders in Brussels, and if the EU identifies a common goal in the Middle East and acts together with the US, Turkey will have to follow suit. Turkey's position will mostly be shaped by the stance of the EU, which could lead us into an open-ended adventure in this region. Turkey should produce its own national policies instead of listening to what the US is saying. By creating a national policy, Turkey will be capable of affecting both the US and the EU. Let us not forget how Turkey managed to overcome the embargo following the 1974 military operation in Cyprus by sticking to its national policy line."

"Turkish-American Relations Have Sunk Below the Level of March 1"

Sedat Ergin observed in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (2/22): "Listening to Undersecretary Feith helps us to draw a conclusion regarding the US view of Turkish-American ties. Feith's logic is shaped by a judgment that insists that the Turks are mistaken. He has a categorical view drawn in black and white terms. This reflects the sentiment at the Pentagon that the US side has done everything correctly. Ankara, however, has lost trust over US actions, especially concerning US policy for Iraq, which poses a security threat to Turkey. There are unkept promises including President Bush's commitment to work together with Turkey to prevent northern Iraq becoming a haven for terrorist attacks against Turkey. Northern Iraq is still a safehaven for the PKK and, due to the increase in terrorist attacks in Turkey by the PKK, the US suffers from a credibility gap here. . The US also ignores the fact that Kurdish groups are working toward changing Kirkuk's demographic character in a systematic way. . The Bush administration continues to see the world through blinders, and the result is a vicious circle in bilateral ties. The increase in conspiracy theories against the US in Turkey might stem from the growing mistrust of America among the Turkish public. The US had better think about that."

"A Subconscious Act"

Okay Gonensin observed in the sensational-mass appeal Vatan (2/22): "The Americans have become concerned about the anti-American atmosphere in Turkey. US Secretary of State Rice was sent to Turkey in order to ease this tension. Americans have great faith in statistics. It is obvious that Washington is taking into consideration recent poll results showing that the percentage of Turks who are anti-American is higher than elsewhere in Europe. The source of the anti-Americanism in Turkey is, this time, Ankara. Top officials of the AKP government, due to their past, have subconsciously revealed their anti-Americana and anti-Jewish feelings. This kind of obsession is fostered by the radical right in Turkey. It has always been like this. The radical left has always been anti-American as well, but has been careful not to let that spill over into anti-Semitism. It is one thing to criticize US policy in the Middle East. It is a different thing entirely to be anti-American. The same goes for Israel's policies in Palestine and anti-Semitism. The difference here is not a nuance, but a basic principle."

"Anti-Semitism"

Umur Talu wrote in the mass appeal "Sabah" (02/20): "So 'the world's most influential newspaper' has called me anti-Semitic. But I'm not laughing this time - I'm angry. All I wrote was that Ambassador Edelman had had a hand in writing a report during the administration of George Bush Sr. that advocated an interventionist US foreign policy supportive of Israel. I asked the question whether the Ambassador's roots may have played a role in this. I never mentioned ethnicity, and certainly not Judaism, and yet I am accused of being anti-Semitic. In fact, I have always supported the civilian and military opposition in Israel. Jews have had a tragic history, including being the victims of genocide. There are some people - mostly in the Islamic world, but also in the US and Europe - who see a Jewish conspiracy behind every event. Douglas Feith, the Pentagon official who warned Turkey over the weekend, is being forced to resign because he wrote a report for the Israeli Prime Minister in which he proposed an aggressive Israeli foreign policy line. Did his roots play a role in this? May, maybe not. But when a secret document leaks from his office to the Israeli state, the question does come to mind. It was probably at least one factor. Hardliners like Pollock and Ambassador Edelman surely must understand this."

"Criticizing the United States, and Fooling Ourselves"

Yasemin Congar wrote from Washington in the mainstream "Milliyet" (02/20): "There is a new report, published by the New York University Faculty of Law and a group of lawyers who defend clients at Guantanamo, that I would urge all turks to read. It documents very persuasively that the United States has legitimized the use of torture in the Global War on Terrorism. This is a legitimate criticism on one of the most important issues raised by the occupation of Iraq. Criticism like this is not what is bothering US officials who deal with Turkey. I cannot remember a single US official, for example, who has ever complained about the lack of action by the US on the PKK issue. What concerns US officials is criticism in Turkey that is based on fantasy, lies, paranoia, ideological blindness, and conspiracy theories. This is different from what we see in Europe, or even in the Arab world. When political leaders produce phony US Government documents and claim there is a CIA plot against them, when writers accuse the CIA and Mossad of responsibility in the 9/11 attacks and the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister, when journalists believe unquestioningly everything that is told to them by Turkmen groups about Kirkuk and northern Iraq, when Turkish generals

accuse US forces in the murder of 5 Turkish security personnel in Mosul with no evidence, when politicians describe operations in Tal Afar and Fallujah as 'genocide,' when Turks speculate about who may or may not be Jewish based on their surnames, and when our politicians call into question the legitimacy of the Iraq elections while the UN Secretary General and other world leaders say they could be

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a hopeful turning point for Iraq - these are the kinds of things that have brought us to this point. This kind of anti-Americanism does more harm to Turkey than anyone else. Do we even see this picture?"

"Robert Pollock's Column"

Kursat Bumin wrote in the Islamist daily "Yeni Safak" (02/20): " Let me be clear: there is plenty in current US foreign policy (let alone the past) that deserves to be criticized mercilessly. I am not recalling the points that Pollock made because I agree with his article. But we need to accept that some of the points he makes are not completely over the top. Some of what he wrote - that the AKP is sneaking Islamism into Turkish politics - is more than over the top. But Pollock is correct when he talks about some in Turkey who try to attribute everything (including the recent tsunami) to the United States, or on US support for the 'Jewish agenda.' His observations about Turkey seeing a conspiracy behind the use of the term 'ecumenical Patriarch' is also on the mark. So Pollock's column is essentially a blend of facts and some wrong-headed analysis. The fact that he identified our newspaper as one of the chief offenders is also not surprising. I have been told by US officials, albeit in more polite and refined terms, that "Yeni Safak" is regarded as an anti-American paper. My main point is this: there is plenty of legitimate criticism of the United States - for its ridiculous claim that it is bringing democracy to Afghanistan and Iraq, for its irresponsibility as a superpower to sign the Kyoto Protocol, and a number of other things. These criticisms are seen elsewhere as well, including in Europe. But this criticism takes on a different dimension here. In fact, we need to pay attention to this - we seem just as angry in our criticisms of the European Union! Is Ismet Berkan right? Have we really become a society of paranoids?"

EDELMAN